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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the growing population trends in California; the need to counteract the current model of community sprawl by designing smarter schools and community growth strategies; and the changes in planning, policies, and practices needed to achieve these goals. Recommended strategies described support the following actions: more participatory and community-based planning; innovative educational facilities that promote the concept of learning communities and schools as centers of community; the joint use of all public facilities; the planning of urban and suburban projects based on the principles of smart growth; the assessment of all public expenditures based on the concept of integrate resource development; and the development of an ongoing vehicle for communications and decision-making between all agencies, institutions and organizations involved in education reform and smart growth issues. Six case studies are highlighted that illustrate some of the goals outlined for smarter schools and smarter growth strategies. (GR)

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# what if

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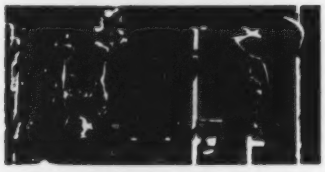
W I T H  S U P P O R T  F R O M

T H E  J A M E S  I R V I N E  F O U N D A T I O N

*new schools*



*better neighborhoods*

*more livable communities*

4

**if**

*the most telling measure*

*of a society is how a*

*community educates its people*

**then**

*education reformers and*

*the "smart growth" movement*

*must all work together*

**to create**

*new schools*

*better neighborhoods*

*more livable communities*

new schools

improved neighborhoods

more livable communities

# FOREWORD

*New Schools • Better Neighborhoods is no longer just the title of a one-time Spring gathering of civic and educational leaders at a Getty Center Symposium. It is the vision of a committed cadre of neighborhood, regional and state leaders who see the potential of voter-approved school, park, library, health and other public funds being intelligently utilized to build not only public facilities that keep the rain out, but more livable urban communities in California. As this compelling report by Steven Bingler makes clear, to fully realize the promise of such an investment strategy in our State, the Smart Growth and School Reform movements must "converge."*

DAVID ABEL
Chair
New Schools • Better Neighborhoods
A Metropolitan Forum Project

September 1999

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY–3.

1 THE CHALLENGE–7.

2 SMART SCHOOLS–9.

3 SMART GROWTH–15.

4 SMART SCHOOLS MEETS SMART GROWTH–18.

5 CASE STUDIES–22.

6 PLANNING SMARTER–30.

7 INTEGRATED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT–33.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS–34.

9 CALL TO CONVERGENCE–36.

*"The health and success of California communities is dependent on strategically located, multi-use school facilities. Community services currently provided independently by cities, counties, special districts and schools districts could be provided jointly through neighborhood centers consolidated with neighborhood schools. In this way, community goals, rather than parochial agency goals, could be emphasized and achieved."*

STEVEN SZALAY
Executive Director
California State Association of Counties

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As California stands at the threshold of the 21st Century, some alarming statistics are creating concerns about the future quality of life for the state's citizens. By the year 2020, the state's population of 33 million is projected to reach 45.3 million, an increase of 37 percent. At the current rate, the state is adding nearly 4 million people, or the equivalent of the population of Los Angeles, every seven years.

Pressures of growth are taxing the physical infrastructure. State mandated reforms in educational practices, including bold measures like class size reduction, have created the need for more and better educational facilities. Poor planning decisions are stretching other forms of public infrastructure to the limit and draining economic vitality from cities and towns. What is needed is a means by which current programs, procedures and policies developed at every level of state, regional and local governance can coalesce to address these challenges with smarter strategies for planning and implementation.

Smarter planning for education means designing schools that serve as centers of their communities, a concept endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education and leading national educational facilities planning organizations. The concept calls for gymnasiums and play fields that double as community parks and recreation centers; auditoriums that serve as community theatres; and incorporating centralized libraries, health clinics and other community services into schools that are designed for greater community access and engagement. Smarter schools can also take advantage of a wide range of community resources–like museums, zoos, and other existing facilities–to create integrated learning centers.

*"If the state of California would make it easier–nay, even mandatory–for school districts, libraries, and parks and recreation departments to work together to build new facilities in older communities, then one of the strongest motives for urban sprawl would be reduced."*

CHARLES NATHANSON, PH.D.
Executive Director
San Diego Dialogue

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Developing smarter schools that serve as centers of their communities is a concept that also has implications for the so-called "smart growth" strategies for urban and regional planning. Over the past thirty years, California's growth pattern has consumed tremendous quantities of land for sprawling low-density development, with the car and its attendant infrastructure–streets and highways, street parking, and parking lots–taking up at least a third of all developed land. This strategy for accommodating growth also produces more traffic congestion and loss of productivity; air pollution and its environmental and public health impacts; the loss of open space; the inability of many to reach jobs and services; and the isolation of children from the elderly among other social and environmental problems.

The current model of sprawl development can be counteracted by designing more livable cities and towns. The planning and design of more community-centered schools can help make cities and towns more attractive to live in by: 1) Creating magnets for urban development; 2) Encouraging the development of inner city housing and employment opportunities; 3) Improving mobility; 4) Reducing suburban migration; and 5) Conserving greenfields.

Likewise, the implementation of smart growth principles supporting more urban development can improve education reform by: 6) Encouraging the creation of learning communities within the rich infrastructure of the urban environment; 7) Enhancing opportunities for community access and participation; and 8) Supporting teachers and school personnel by providing more affordable and attractive places to live and work.

There are a small, but growing, number of programs and projects in the state that represent some ways to achieve the goals outlined for smarter schools and smarter growth strategies. This report includes an overview of seven case studies that embody some of

*"The future of California and the future of the Latino community are tied together. As Latinos grow in our numbers and influence, we need to take greater responsibility for all our children, schools, and environment. Only if we link schools with healthy neighborhoods will we realize the aspirations of our residents, new and old."*

LUIS ARTEAGA
Associate Director
Latino Issues Forum

these smarter planning principles. These ideas and examples point to an opportunity to implement smarter, more efficiently planned community infrastructures through integrated resource development. Even a small improvement in the allocation of public resources could yield billions of dollars annually in the California economy.

In order to accomplish these goals, some changes in planning, policies and practices will be needed to.

- Support more participatory and community-based planning.
- Support innovative educational facilities that promote the concept of learning communities and schools as centers of community.
- Support the joint use of all public facilities.
- Support the planning of urban and suburban projects based on the principles of smart growth.
- Support the assessment of all public expenditures based on the concept of integrated resource development.
- Support the development of an ongoing vehicle for communications and decision-making between all agencies, institutions and organizations involved in education reform and smart growth issues

*"Planning and executing the joint use of public facilities – reducing the duplication of similar functions and services – is a smarter, better use of taxpayer money."*

JOEL FOX
President Emeritus
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

California, wake up! Every year educational facilities are built all across the state. Too many of these facilities are dinosaurs the day they open. At the same time, a wide range of libraries, parks and other state, regional and local facilities are being planned and constructed to duplicate many of the same functions and services. Meanwhile, a demand for 250,000 new homes every year is consuming acres of farmland in suburban sprawl, exacerbating critical problems with transportation and pollution. A cri-



5.

sis already exists. The rapid escalation of this crisis is producing irreversible consequences for the quality of life in California now and in the future.

The resources needed to meet the challenge are already available.

Powerful movements aimed at education reform and smart growth offer promising concepts, coalitions, policy recommendations and communications vehicles to intensify the evolution of creative solutions.

*An immediate statewide summit to explore pathways of convergence for these two movements would be a good place to start.*

*"Opportunities abound for investment in our urban centers. If smart public investments are strategically made in new schools, libraries, and health facilities, new private investment and more livable communities will be the result."*

LINDA GRIEGO
Interim CEO
Los Angeles Community
Development Bank

# I THE CHALLENGE

As California stands at the threshold of the 21st century, some alarming statistics are creating concerns about the future quality of life for its citizens. By the year 2020, the state's population of 33 million is projected to reach 45.3 million, an increase of 37 percent. At the current rate, the state is adding nearly 4 million people, or the equivalent of the population of Los Angeles, every seven years.

This surge in population growth is already creating complications in a number of areas. One of the most impacted is the field of education. Coupled with state mandated reforms in educational practices that include bold measures like class size reduction, pressure has come to bear on the need for more and better educational facilities and an adequate supply of teachers to address these and other critical issues. "Smart" planning is required to determine where and how these needs can be met.

Pressures of growth are also taxing the physical infrastructure in other areas. Urban centers, rural main streets and residential neighborhoods are deteriorating. Poor planning decisions are stretching public infrastructure to the limit and draining economic vitality from cities and towns. Instead of supporting the improvement of urban infrastructure, a longstanding trend towards suburban development is competing with the renewal of the urban environment. Thousands of acres of farmland and greenfields are being consumed and problems with transportation, public finance and environmental sustainability are escalating.

What is needed is a means by which current programs, procedures and policies developed at every level of state, regional and local governance can coalesce to address these challenges and offer solutions to meet them. Two current movements in the state of California offer insights into some of the opportunities that are

*"No one knows better than teachers how critical it is for improving student achievement to intelligently site, design and build smaller, more community friendly schools in our urban core. Done well, there will be little need for parents to flee cities. Done well, and schools will once again become the centers of our neighborhoods."*

DAY HIGUCHI
President
United Teachers of
Los Angeles



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available. The first movement focuses on issues related to education reform, including the development of educational infrastructure. The second movement involves the concept of "smart growth" as an antidote to suburban sprawl and a means for creating more livable communities. While each of these movements presents possibilities for bettering California's current crisis of expansion, an alliance of these two concepts will provide even greater opportunities and insights.

*"Creating a school that packs 5,000 children into one corner of a 30-acre lot is clearly part of the old paradigm. We need to build small schools and more intimate learning places."*

DAVID TOKOFSKY
LAUSD Board of Education

2

## SMART SCHOOLS

One of the largest statewide expenditures in public infrastructure goes to building and maintaining public schools. This year, public K-12 school enrollment reached a record 5,844,111 students, surpassing the previous all time high by more than 110,000 students. Enrollment has more than tripled in the past 50 years. The estimated growth in student enrollment is approximately 50,000 students annually. New enrollment records will continue to be set for the next nine years, increasing to an estimated 6,180,921 students in K-12 public schools by the 2007/2008 school year. This constitutes a total increase of 547,275 students, or 10 percent between 1997 and 2007. This estimate includes a decrease of 345,193 Anglo students and an increase of 800,000 Hispanic students, indicating the current and continuing demographic trend toward greater diversity, but, in part, also the decision of many Anglo parents to leave the public school system.

The renovation and replacement of educational facilities is currently in a state of crisis. It can take up to seven years to run the gauntlet of local and state approvals and procedures before a school is ready to serve its constituents. As a result, school boards and building officials are working hard to get facilities on line faster. Larger and larger schools are being built in an attempt to address the problem. In an attempt to save time and money, districts are sometimes forced to replicate building plans that are outdated with respect to current educational research and teaching strategies. In most cases, projects move forward without much involvement from students, parents, educators and community members, all who have a long-term stake in the outcome. The result is often community alienation, disenfranchisement or even backlash.

There is a woefully inadequate allocation of time and money for planning how schools will fit into their communities; how the

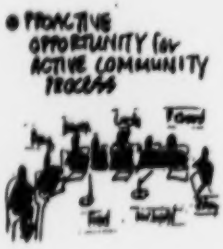
*"The fact that one of every three students doesn't technically have a seat is what brought those that gathered at the New Schools•Better Neighborhoods Symposium together. It's not good enough to just put them in seats. We have to take this opportunity, with the money on the table and overwhelming demand, to create school facilities that are better attuned to what we know works for students in urban areas–and that's integrated involvement with their communities."*

TED MITCHELL
President
Occidental College

efficiencies of building larger and larger schools may not be justified in light of critical social and educational consequences; how combining school and community uses could produce more efficient and community centered environments for learning; or even for adequately identifying risk factors like building on toxic waste sites and other environmental hazards that can lead to mistakes at a scale that would have once been considered unimaginable.

It's not always that there isn't enough time allocated to get the job done or enough well-intentioned people running the show. It's not even that everybody isn't working hard enough. Rather, in its haste to get something accomplished, the system can't seem to work smart enough to accomplish an increasingly complex set of needs with a limited quantity of resources.

*Smart School Planning and Investment*




The current need to renovate or replace educational facilities presents an opportunity for citizens, educators and planners to take a much smarter view of the design of learning environments. *This "smarter" view can include everything from how learning spaces are designed to the process used to plan and design them.* More traditional educational facilities were once designed to sustain a model of education characterized by large-group, teacher-centered instruction occurring in isolated classrooms. But current knowledge and research about learning calls for new models. These new models of education are characterized by more active student involvement–by students doing rather than just receiving, creating rather than recreating, thinking, working and solving problems. They are supported by strategies such as cooperative, project-based and interdisciplinary learning, all requiring students to move about, work in various sized groups and be active. Furthermore, new models call for all students to learn to higher standards. This in turn has resulted in an increased emphasis on learning styles, multiple intelligences and the special needs of each student.

*Smart school planning and investment* means replacing the current factory schools with facilities that support these and other examples of current best practices and ongoing research in the learning sciences. This means, among other things, that school populations should be significantly less than previously projected, and that large school populations may in fact be detrimental to the learning process. The development of smaller schools on smaller sites can also save time and money, and put schools closer to parents and students, allowing schools to better serve as centers of their communities.

There are also opportunities to accommodate more efficient and productive uses for educational facilities. For the most part, school facilities in California have been, and continue to be, designed and constructed to serve a specific educational purpose based on a limited educational function. Most educational facilities operate during a 7-8 hour time frame as stand alone institutions, with limited access or joint use by other community organizations. In most cases, the auditoriums, sports facilities, food service, libraries, media center, computer labs and other specialized areas of the school are available for use by the general public only on a very limited basis. Thus, local municipalities must provide duplicate facilities to serve the same functions, with separate budgets for capital improvements, staff and operating expenses.

*"We have so few resources that it just makes sense to maximize benefits with the money we do have. By thinking of schools as the heart of our neighborhoods where we build our future, realizing that they should be healthy, safe and inspiring...is a no-brainer."*

FELICIA MARCUS
Administrator
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency Region 9

*Smart school planning and investment* means designing facilities that can accommodate expanded community functions to save on the time, money, land and other environmental resources used to duplicate functions elsewhere. Smarter designs for new or renovated facilities can accommodate direct community access to spaces like libraries, gymnasiums, auditoriums, performing arts, athletic and recreational spaces that can serve the broader needs of the community. Instead of being designed for a limited time frame of 7-8 hours every day, combining community uses can produce facilities

that operate 12-14 hours, serving a wide range of community needs that can also include things like health clinics, counseling centers and other social services. These designs can be implemented without jeopardizing the health and safety of students, by having certain community activities take place during school hours and others limited to evenings and weekends. The result of these smarter and more efficient joint use design strategies is to reduce duplication of community infrastructure.

Today's educational facilities should also be designed to strengthen the integral relationship that exists between a school and its community in other ways. They should serve a variety of community needs in partnership with a wide spectrum of public, civic and private organizations. They should provide spaces for public meetings and activities. They should provide access to communications technology. They should help meet the leisure, recreational and wellness needs of the community. They should support relationships with businesses that are productive for students and supportive of the local economy. They should provide spaces that facilitate the use of external experts and skilled community volunteers for a variety of functions, including mentorships, apprenticeships and work-based and service learning. When implemented through a community-based planning process, the results can also include increased community engagement and support for a wide range of cultural, social, economic, organizational and educational needs

Smarter schools should be inviting places rather than foreboding institutions. Their locations should encourage community use and their shared public spaces should be accessible–day and night, all year round–to the community. Schools should be places where creative configurations of space expand their use to encompass early learning and adult education; where learning occurs "after hours," at night and on weekends; where school-to-school partnerships,

links with businesses and collaboration with higher education are encouraged and supported. They should enable learners of all ages and serve as centers for lifelong learning. Today we know that 12 or 14 years of learning will not be enough to equip people for the rest of their lives. We can't afford to think of graduation as a finish line, and that means that one of the most important end products of schools needs to be citizens who have learned how to continue to learn. Schools should support learning for people of all ages. In short, school facilities should allow access to flexible and comprehensive programs to meet all learning needs. They should provide space and programs for everything from early learning to adult education and training.

*Smarter school planning and investment* can also extend the learning environment beyond the traditional school site by creating schools in non-traditional settings. When community sites become destinations for educational field trips and extended academic learning centers, the links between school and community are strengthened. But these extensions are not limited to field trips alone. Through partnerships between school boards and other community organizations, a wide variety of community resources like museums, zoos, parks, hospitals and even government buildings can be enlisted to serve as full-time integrated learning centers. In this way, the school is not only the center of the community, but the whole community can also be seen as the center of the school–school as community and community as school–*a learning community*.

All of these examples point to ways that schools can better serve as the center of their communities, either by playing a more integral role as a community activity center or by extending the learning environment further out into the community to take better advantage of a wider range of community resources. Schools that are more integrated with their communities in

*"The Trust for Public Land believes that public access to open space is vital to the quality of life in our cities. Any effort that seeks to increase the availability of public open space by encouraging the sharing of athletic fields and schoolyards, so they 'double' as parks, can only make our cities more livable and lessen the pressures for urban sprawl to eat up our unique and beautiful landscapes on the city's edge."*

LARRY KAPLAN
Director
Los Angeles Office
The Trust for Public Land

these ways can strengthen a community's sense of identity, coherence and consensus. Like a new version of the old town square, they can serve as a community hub, a center for civic infrastructure, a place where students and others can learn to participate and support the common good.

*A national movement* integrating schools more closely with the community is growing, with support from the U.S. Department of Education and other organizations. At a recent national conference focused on the design of learning environments, a set of national design principles were identified and adopted. These design principles call for educational facilities and designs that will:

- Enhance teaching and learning and accommodate the needs of all learners;
- Serve as centers of community;
- Result from a planning/design process involving all stakeholders;
- Provide for health, safety and security;
- Make effective use of all available resources;
- Allow for flexibility and adaptability to changing needs.

In addition to the U.S. Department of Education, these design principles have been endorsed by the Council of Educational Facilities Planners International and the American Institute of Architects, which together represent the largest contingent of educational facility planners in the nation.

# 3 SMART GROWTH

Developing schools that serve as centers of their communities is a concept that also has implications for a second important area of reform in the state of California that embodies the "smart growth" strategies for urban and regional planning. As supported by organizations like the Urban Land Institute and the California Futures Network, these principles address issues impacting the overall quality of life of all Californians. These principles are evidenced through a balance between economic prosperity, social equity and environmental quality. These ends require a long-range planning strategy to accommodate growth in a way that promotes prosperous and livable communities; provides better opportunities for housing and transportation; conserves green space and the natural environment; and protects California's working farm and forest lands. Following is a list of the California Futures Network's "smart growth" principles:

- *Plan for the Future:* Make government more responsive, effective and accountable by reforming the system of land-use planning and public financing.
- *Promote Prosperous and Livable Communities:* Make existing communities vital and healthy places for all residents to live, work and raise a family.
- *Provide Better Housing and Transportation Opportunities:* Provide efficient transportation alternatives and a range of housing choices affordable to all residents, without jeopardizing farmland, open space and wildlife habitat.
- *Conserve Green Space and the Natural Environment:* Focus new development in areas planned for growth while protecting air and water quality and providing green space for recreation, water recharge and wildlife.

*"When we drink from the public trough, let's make leverage the beverage. Each acre of college campus that can be shared with a high school may generate $2 million in improvements. Each new school in a neighborhood can create the equivalent of a new 2-acre park. But we get these results only if school, park and college leaders are willing to share their turf–literally."*

BOB NICCUM
Director of Real Estate
and Asset Management
LAUSD

❦ *Protect California's Agricultural and Forest Lands:* Protect California's farm, range and forest lands from sprawl and the pressure to convert farmland for development.

One way to achieve these results is to counteract the current model of sprawl development by focusing more effort on the design of more livable cities and towns. By concentrating higher density development in more urban environments, more of the open land currently being consumed by roadways and housing that are the products of "suburban sprawl" can be conserved as "greenfields," which includes farms, forests and natural habitat.

Over the past thirty years, California's growth pattern has consumed tremendous quantities of land for sprawling low-density development. The Central Valley, the nation's most productive and prolific agricultural region, will be threatened if current sprawling land-use patterns continue. Already, more than 12 percent of the Valley's farmland has been paved over. If this pattern of low-density sprawl continues, the Valley will lose more than one million acres of farmland by the year 2040, much of it on the best soil for growing crops. This represents nearly 20 percent of the Valley's remaining farmland (*American Farmland Trust and UC Berkeley*). In the meantime, a significant portion of the California economy stands at risk. Agriculture is California's number one industry. In 1996, California's agriculture and related food processing industries employed over 500,000 people and generated $75.6 billion in sales (*Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy*). Losing a million acres of farmland would cost more than $5 billion annually in lost business for farmers, ranchers, suppliers, processors, and others involved in agriculture.

From 1970 to 1990, the population of Los Angeles increased by 45 percent while the amount of developed land increased by 300 percent (Diamond and Noonan, *Land Use in America*). Similar

development in other metropolitan areas has spawned a massive increase in vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled by the public, and caused significant environmental harm. Between 1970 and 1995, the state's population increased by 60 percent, from 20 to 30 million people, but the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) more than doubled, from 103 billion to more than 270 billion miles of travel per year (*California Air Resources Board*). Overall VMT in the state is projected to nearly double to 488 billion in the next two decades. The resulting air pollution not only has public health impacts; it also affects agriculture by reducing crop yields at an annual cost of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Sprawling developments consume ever-increasing amounts of land, with the car and its attendant infrastructure–streets and highways, street parking and parking lots–taking up at least a third of all developed land. Moreover, this strategy for accommodating growth produces more traffic congestion and loss of productivity; air pollution and its environmental and public health impacts; the loss of open space; the inability of many to reach jobs and services; and the isolation of children from the elderly among other social and environmental problems.

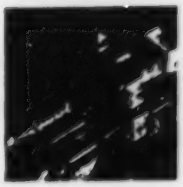
Based on these disturbing facts, there is a growing concern that the traditional means of accommodating growth in California's population is in need of serious reform.

*"California is going to grow. The only question is, are we going to grow in a way that promotes a better life for most Californians or are we going to grow in a way that depletes our resources and ultimately undermines the quality of life in our state?"*

JOHN MALTBIE
County Manager
San Mateo County

# 4 Smart Schools Meet Smart Growth

The strategies for planning and designing smarter schools coincide with those for planning to accommodate the principles of smart growth. The most viable means for accommodating California's projected population and infrastructure needs for the next two decades is through a combination of more compact suburban development and a renewal of cities and towns. The planning and design of more community-centered schools can enhance the principles of smart growth. By serving as a catalyst for inner-city development, the proper planning of schools can help by:
1) Creating magnets for urban development; 2) Encouraging the development of inner-city housing and employment opportunities; 3) Improving mobility; 4) Reducing suburban migration; 5) Conserving greenfields.



Likewise, the implementation of smart growth principles supporting more urban development can improve education reform by:
6) Encouraging the creation of learning communities within the rich infrastructure of the urban environment; 7) Enhancing opportunities for community access and participation; and 8) Supporting teachers and school personnel by providing more affordable and attractive places to live and work.

## *1–Creating Urban Magnets*

One of the key ingredients in the development of more viable cities and towns is to provide public facilities that act as magnets for development in inner cities and in already established suburbs. These magnets include things like libraries, parks, fitness and recreation centers, arts centers, and clinics for health and human services. One of the most important of these public facilities is a thriving and healthy system of public education.

*2–Encouraging Inner City Housing and Employment Opportunities*

The market for inner-city housing for families is in many cases dependent on the quality of inner-city schools. The design of more community-centered schools provides an opportunity for the development of more livable inner-city neighborhoods. To the degree that a larger number of smaller schools can be implemented, opportunities exist to provide access to educational facilities that are within close proximity, or even within walking distance to home. The result can be increased parental participation, less dependence on vehicular transportation and increased quality of life. To the degree that schools can also be designed to serve as social, recreational and cultural centers of their communities, these resources can also be provided with greater access and convenience.

Another factor influencing the development of inner-city housing is employment opportunities. Last year, schools alone employed 327,198 certified staff in the state of California. Schools, especially when combined with other community activities, can offer employment opportunities for administrative staff, teachers and support personnel.

*3– Improving Mobility*

In 1997-98, K-12 schools in the state of California spent $1,400,658,122 on transportation. Through the design of smaller schools and more compact neighborhood environments where parents, teachers and school personnel can find affordable housing within close proximity to schools, personal mobility can be enhanced and costs can be reduced. Within the more compact urban context, school transportation can also be more easily coordinated with existing public transit than in other places.

*"We know what we have to do: create the best schools we can for L.A.'s urban communities. And more than ever, the stakeholders at LAUSD, the Prop. BB Citizens' Oversight Committee, the community, and the city and state governments are on the same page. We will do whatever it takes to turn our parks, libraries and schools into vital, community -based institutions. And studies and reports are not enough. I won't feel a sense of accomplishment until the kids get off those buses and into their new schools."*

STEVEN L. SOBOROFF
Chair, Prop. BB Citizens' Oversight Committee

*4– Reducing Suburban Migration*

Developing schools as centers of community with increased access, community participation and improved academic achievement can help to create more livable communities and neighborhoods in the inner city. Many residents fleeing the inner city for the suburbs are leaving in search of more stable and dependable schools. One way to help reverse the trend of outward migration is to develop schools in cities and townships that encourage community involvement, achieve academic excellence and attract more people to live and raise their families there.

*5–Conserving Greenfields*

Every acre of brownfield developed in the inner city conserves at least one acre of greenfield in the rural environment and, depending on density, possibly more. Five to ten percent of California's urban areas, some 250,000 to 520,000 acres, are brownfields, empty lots and abandoned buildings (*Bank of America et al, Beyond Sprawl: New Patterns of Growth to Fit the New California*).

*6–Building Learning Communities*

Every community is a rich, information-filled database in full motion, where math, science, language arts and social studies are embedded in a set of resources that we use every day to explore, discover, innovate and produce. Integrating schools with their community in a way that enhances opportunities for mentorships, internships, shared facilities and other uses of the physical, cultural, social, economic and organizational environment as a teaching tool can be accomplished in suburban as well as rural environments. However, these opportunities are more accessible in the urban context of cities and towns where these community resources are more dense and proximate.

*7) Increasing Community Participation and Access*

Developing schools that serve as the center of their communities requires collaboration between students, parents, educators and community leaders and residents. Increased participation in the planning and implementation of more integrated and accessible school facilities provides opportunities to develop stronger and more lasting interactions and relationships among all community stakeholders.

*8) Supporting Teachers and School Personnel*

Developing smaller schools and affordable housing in the urban environment provides opportunities for teachers and school personnel with limited incomes to live within close proximity to public transit, or even within walking distance to their work. Opportunities also exist through tax increment and other financing strategies to encourage developers to create affordable and subsidized housing for all school personnel.

*"For the first time in a generation, we have the money in Los Angeles to build schools that can actually help children learn better right in their own communities. Whether we succeed now in doing what is right for our children will be our legacy as leaders in this city, and I hope everyone will pay attention to how we proceed."*

BILL ALLEN
President and CEO
Economic Alliance of the
San Fernando Valley

# 5 CASE STUDIES

There are many programs and projects in the state of California and elsewhere that exemplify some of the goals outlined for smarter schools and smarter growth strategies. A recent "New Schools • Better Neighborhoods," symposium in Los Angeles produced some interesting examples. Attending the symposium were a group of about 150 local and statewide leaders. The subjects for discussion were broad in scope, from vision and goals to policy and regulation. Presentations and panels focused on exploring obstacles and opportunities for an expanded vision of schools that could better serve students, educators, neighborhoods and communities. Included were some local case studies that address these issues in ways that were both informative and insightful.

*Cahuenga Elementary School–Los Angeles, California*

The Director of Real Estate and Asset Management for the Los Angeles Unified School District, whose responsibilities include managing the process for school site selection, presented the first case study. In his presentation, the director reviewed the recently selected site for a proposed new Cahuenga Elementary School, which falls within one of the most overcrowded attendance areas in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Over 1600 students living within Cahuenga's attendance area are bused to other locations every day. The director of real estate had worked in earnest to meet the goals for the site selection process. The process had proceeded by the book, following a "Site Acquisition Flow Chart" developed by the school district's real estate branch. The chart stipulates 124 functions, notifications, meetings and actions required for the approval and acquisition process. Included are three meetings with the neighborhood.

A community meeting was held on November 9, 1998 to explain the need for the new 1600 student school and to invite community suggestions for possible locations. Six people attended. A profes-

sional real estate consulting firm was employed to drive each block in the study area and identify three potential locations. In February 1999, staff reviewed the recommendations. No community suggestions were received. The staff recommended, by consensus, a 4.75-acre site that currently houses 21 single-family homes and an 8-unit apartment building. The site was approved by the Los Angeles Board of Education in March 1999. Six and a half million dollars were set aside for site acquisition.

Meanwhile, the Beverly-Kingsley Neighborhood Association had been meeting to discuss the new school project. The site selected by the school district included 19 of the community's most prized Craftsman bungalows that had long been nurtured by the neighborhood. At the symposium, the neighborhood association presented an alternative community-designed plan that would redistribute the 1600 students into three smaller schools. The proposed sites would eliminate some of the community's most blighted properties and put the schools closer to the heaviest concentrations of students.

*"New schools could replace the blight that plagues inner city communities like South Central L.A. Many neighborhoods are held hostage to the crime and violence clustered around hundreds of vacant lots, abandoned buildings and nuisance businesses. Building new schools presents an opportunity to mobilize parents, youth, seniors and business owners in the effort."*

KAREN BASS
Executive Director
Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention
Los Angeles, CA

*Camino Nuevo Charter Academy–Los Angeles, California*

The Cahuenga case study became even more interesting after a second neighborhood case study was presented. The director of a neighborhood non-profit organization called Pueblo Nuevo Development led this case study. In collaboration with other community leaders and organizations, Pueblo Nuevo is proposing to create the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, a 240 student charter school. As proposed, the Academy would occupy an existing 1/3-acre shopping center site in the MacArthur Park neighborhood. Recreational activities will be accommodated through a joint-use arrangement with MacArthur Park, which is three blocks away. The total capital costs for the project are estimated at $650,000 for site acquisition and another $350,000 for construction, or an average of about $4,200 per student.

As the panel of Pueblo Nuevo representatives continued their presentation, comparisons with the Cahuenga Elementary School, where the cost per student would probably exceed $4,000 just for land acquisition, became obvious. Including the cost of construction, the total cost per student for Cahuenga could exceed $22,000–more than five times as much as the Camino Nuevo Academy project. Even though the quality of space at a renovated shopping center may not compare as favorably with that of a brand new facility at Cahuenga, the lower cost and lack of complexity of the smaller project, and the opportunity to house large quantities of students in smaller, more intimate educational settings provided a compelling comparison. Given the large quantity of small faltering shopping center sites available throughout the Los Angeles region, the lack of disruption to existing residents and improvements to the urban fabric of the adjoining commercial streets presented other clear advantages for planning at a smaller scale.

*TreePeople–Los Angeles, California*

One of the most compelling case studies presented at the symposium came from another not-for-profit environmental group known as TreePeople. Rather than addressing issues related to a single school, this case study addressed environmental issues that apply to all Los Angeles school sites. The TreePeople organization has been developing an integrated environmental planning model for school sites that amalgamates beneficial qualities from multiple resources. One focus of their work has been on asphalt paving, which is an enormous source of heat at schools and also a contributor to flooding and pollution. A large proportion of a recent facilities bond was allocated for repaving asphalt at LAUSD schools, one of the largest amounts of pavement under one ownership within the Los Angeles watershed. With the help of scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy and Lawrence Livermore Labs, TreePeople determined that by planting trees to help shade and cool the

buildings, a net savings of 12-18 percent in energy could be achieved, and that these cost savings alone would be more than enough to pay for installing and maintaining the additional natural landscape. As a result, the School Board has agreed to replace more than 30 percent of the asphalt on each campus with trees and greening. The TreePeople team is currently exploring how more natural landscape can also curtail runoff, reducing the construction of expensive storm water drainage structures and pollution abatement, resulting in reduced capital and maintenance costs for other state and municipal agencies.

In many ways, all of the Los Angeles case studies share a similar kind of David vs. Goliath subtheme. In the face of limited resources and policy hurdles, battles by neighborhood associations and environmental groups have ensued against the behemoth Los Angeles Unified School District and its policies. But one of the most endearing qualities of the case study presentations was the spirit of camaraderie that prevailed through the many alternating moments of frustration and revelation. No one stood up to blame the LAUSD's Director of Real Estate for what seemed to some like an impending boondoggle at Cahuenga. The director, with clearly honorable intentions, came off more as a victim than a perpetrator. Sympathy also prevailed for the plight of Pueblo Nuevo in their quest for approvals and charter school status. The director of TreePeople rose to heroic status as his programs and their convincing financial justifications have begun to chip away at the fiduciary Achilles heel of the embedded Los Angeles school bureaucracy.

The New Schools • Better Neighborhoods symposium case studies present compelling examples of how a more systemic and community-based approach to the design of educational facilities can maximize the social, environmental and financial return on public investment. But in addition to addressing community needs and concerns, new environments for learning must also accommodate

*"We have to discard the concept that schools must be structured and constructed exactly as in the past. The Board...must be open to innovative thinking in both areas. The community-centered school, an idea that surfaced decades ago, should be reconsidered. It develops the school as the veritable center of community services, a boon to both children and the neighborhood."*

VALERIE FIELDS
LAUSD Board of Education

new strategies for educational delivery where curriculum is more interactive, hands-on and project based. In the words of one student: "Tell us why we need to know it–make it real or just forget it."

One example of this kind of educational innovation is being developed in San Francisco's Exploratorium museum. The following is a description of that program followed by some other community-based educational facilities case studies from across the state of California:

*Exploratorium–San Francisco, California*

The Exploratorium is a museum of science, art and human perception located in the Palace of Fine Arts in the Marina district of San Francisco. In addition to thousands of hands-on exhibits available to the general public, the museum also operates a wide range of educational outreach projects.

The Science Explorer is an outreach program that allows students of all ages to explore and create projects in their own home. A detailed publication provides opportunities to use everything from the refrigerator to the kitchen sink to learn the principles of math and science and a wide range of other educational content.

Another program called the Learning Studio is an experimental multimedia and communications lab. The Learning Studio works primarily with teachers, Exploratorium staff and artists, providing opportunities to share considerable knowledge and expertise through the development of creative interactive multimedia and telecommunications. Projects have included the world's first Internet video conference, a plane in the stratosphere and a special interactive event for the international celebration of Pi Day.

The extension of the Exploratorium's resources through the Science Explorer and Learning Studio programs illustrate an opportunity for other organizations to serve as extended learning centers

through the application of current developments in project-based learning and multimedia and telecommunications technology.

*Hayward Unified Master Plan–Hayward, California*

A recently completed educational facilities master plan for the Hayward Unified School District presents a different opportunity for thematic learning. Hayward, California is a community of about 112,000 people (1990 census) on the east side of the San Francisco Bay. There are more than 88 different ethnic groups represented in the community. The school system teaches to more than 43 languages. The Hayward community has decided to celebrate its rich cultural diversity through the development of future educational facilities. The decision was made through an eighteen month community-based planning process that included more than 100 parents, students, educators and other stakeholders. As a result, a new site needed to accommodate approximately 400 students will be developed as a fine arts multi-cultural museum, academy and cultural center.

*"Investments need to be made in healthy, efficient and sustainably-designed schools, with the community as a full partner in the process, decision-making and outcome to make schools centers of learning and neighborhoods."*

LILLIAN KAWASAKI
General Manager,
L.A. City Environmental Affairs Department

In addition to its formal education function, current plans call for the new facility to serve as a tourism attraction for the entire Bay Area and as a national center for research in multi-culturalism. An innovative new integrated curriculum will be the focus of the academy's academic program, with extensions to serve all of the community's existing Pre-K-12 and Higher Ed learning sites.

*Western Placer Unified Master Plan–Placer County, California*

The Western Placer Unified School District has developed a similar master plan. Known as "Project Build," the plan supports and enhances the district's instructional strategies within the context of the whole learning community. During two school terms, over 100 community members, faculty and staff, administrators, parents and students formed a committee to explore and investigate community resources that impact facilities development. In

addition, the school district has incorporated the planning process into the curriculum, teaching students to design, draw and make models in preparation for better communication with architects who will be designing the area's new schools.

One local real estate developer learned through the "Project Build" planning meetings that the natural environment could be used as a powerful learning tool. The developer then donated 170 acres of prime real estate, including a Native American archaeological site, to the district. The same developer also donated 2,000 mandarin orange trees that will be planted on the site. At the end of seven years, the mandarin grove is projected to provide revenues of over $400,000 per year for the district. The agricultural project will be managed through an innovative environmental studies curriculum from which students will receive academic and ecological training in non-traditional surroundings. A primary component of the master plan calls for even more extensive use of existing community resources for learning.

The Western Placer Education Foundation, which was formed as an outgrowth of the planning process, has acquired over $3 million in grants and resources to support the development of an integrated environmental/arts curriculum. The district now owns or has access to more than 5,000 acres of natural land for educational use.

As a result of the "Project Build" planning process, the district is also moving to implement a shared 10-14 grade level Lincoln High -Sierra Community College Learning Center. The center will address the growing need for a seamless educational program to educate and train high school and community college students for careers in the region's burgeoning high-tech industry.

The Cesar Chavez Elementary School was developed through a community-based planning process involving a cross-section of the community's predominantly Hispanic population. The new facility serves its larger community through a number of extended uses. The health center doubles as a community clinic; a parent center serves as a community meeting room; a library media facility is open in the evening and on weekends for community instruction and tutorials; the cafeteria serves as a community meeting hall; and playgrounds double as a Class III soccer field.

The architectural design includes many educational innovations to serve contemporary teaching practices, but goes even further to celebrate the community's predominantly Mexican-American heritage. A 350 foot long mural of a cosmic Indian is incorporated in the paving of the complex's large academic yard. On one facade of the Library/Administration building is a reference to the logo of the United Farm Workers, and on another is a colorful Quetzal Indian headdress. A two story, multi-striped serpent includes references to the Anasazi farmer and the Aztec astronomer. An Incan tapestry is designed into the classroom wing and storytelling facades of family, cooking, gardening and the jaguar world are incorporated into the walls of the cafetorium. Through its architectural design, the school serves as an interpretive center for students, a cultural resource for the community and a 21st century landmark.

*"The inclusion of Family Resource Centers when building [schools] will provide needed infrastructure for both community development and increased support for students. [These] centers [could] provide convenient full-day access to a broad range of family focused services and programs, improve the educational environment, increase participation and leadership opportunities in the community, strengthen neighborhoods, and promote the health and well-being of children and families."*

MICHAEL SHANNON
Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities
UCLA

# 6 PLANNING SMARTER

These and other recent projects represent an approach to planning and community development that is more integrative and participatory in nature. At the core of the strategy is the recognition that sharing resources is often smarter than duplicating resources and that working together can produce greater gains than working in isolation.

The evolution of a more integrative and efficient community-based planning strategy opens up significant opportunities for maximizing the resources of the community as a whole. Imagine the educational, social, environmental and financial benefits of the case studies presented if these ideas were implemented in districts and cities throughout the state. Imagine the efficiency that could be created in a community where all of its assets are integrated. Imagine the impact if all of the community's physical, cultural, social, economic, organizational and educational resources could be planned together in a way that maximizes the collaborative benefits of each. Over the past ten years, architects have been developing and implementing a technique for integrating community resources called the Concordia model, where all community assets are organized into six interdependent environments.

The first of these environments contains the community's physical resources that encompass the total of the community's built and natural assets. These assets include all of the community's buildings, bridges, highways and telecommunications infrastructure as well as natural resources like parks and other outdoor recreation areas.

The second component of the interdependent community system encompasses the community's cultural resources. Included in this category are programs and artifacts related to the expression of individual and communal values and aesthetics.

The third component encompasses social resources that include a wide spectrum of the health and human resource assets required to maintain a healthy community infrastructure.

The fourth component of the total community system is the economic environment. Represented here are programs and activities related to business and commerce. Included are activities ranging from regional and local economic development programs to innovations and initiatives developed by private entrepreneurs.

The fifth category of community assets encompasses organizational resources. Included in this category are the various components of community governance, including the school board, city and county boards of supervisors, Rotary Club, Lions Club and a myriad of other civic organizations. This category identifies how decisions made on behalf of the community-at-large are developed, deliberated and implemented.

*"Schools shouldn't be just schools; they should be centers that spawn the civic fabric and provide ideas and places for people to meet. They should become village centers."*

CONNIE RICE
The Advancement Project
Los Angeles, CA

The sixth component includes all of the community's educational resources, encompassing a wide variety of learning assets. Included in this category are all Pre-K to 12, community college and university educational delivery systems. Also included in this comprehensive category are all of the community's civil service training and skills development programs along with similar programs in the private sector.

These six resources include a wide cross-section of the community's most vital learning and living assets. Although they can be seen as independent components of every community system, it is the quality of their interaction that can contribute to the community's overall health and well being. In the best scenario, educational information interacts with economic information, cultural and social data, and other available data to the point where all interactions are linked in a contiguous living web of interactive data and knowledge. When this web has been achieved, the

community's assets can be said to be working in concord. In this context, our current community learning and living malaise can be seen as a kind of congenital disease that blocks the flow of information between each of the community's vital organs. When the system is functioning to its maximum advantage, the parts support the collective whole and the collective whole likewise nourishes all of its various parts.

But in order to succeed, the development, celebration and integration of these diverse community assets must be in tune with the heartbeat of the community organism. It is for this reason that the planning and implementation of these collaborative ideas must be developed through the creative input of a wide range of community stakeholders. The noted progressive educator John Dewey said that we need not only education in democracy, but also democracy in education. The planning and design of a more integrated and ubiquitous learning community provides an opportunity to engage students, parents, educators and a wide variety of community stakeholders in decisions that benefit all aspects of the community's health and well being.

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# 7 INTEGRATED RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

When implemented correctly, a more integrated and participatory approach to the allocation of community resources can save time, money and environmental resources. This concept of integrated resource development is at the core of what is needed to develop more effective and economical community systems.

The funds currently needed just for developing and maintaining public infrastructure in the state of California over a ten year period is $82.2 billion. With an unfunded balance of $40.4 billion, policy makers and residents should seek and seize upon all opportunities to reduce duplication and reduce the level of funding and debt. This $40.4 billion is distributed in the following manner: $27.6 billion (37.6 percent) for business, transportation and housing; $9 billion (12.2 percent) for resources and EPA; $9.5 billion (12.9 percent) for youth and adult correctional; $15.4 billion (21 percent) for higher education; $8.9 billion for K-12 education; and the remaining $3.1 billion (4.2 percent) for other infrastructure needs.

Even a small improvement in the allocation of these resources could yield billions annually in the California economy. But the efficiency of community resources must be measured not only in fiscal terms, but also with respect to environmental and social issues.

With proper planning, more healthy, productive and livable community environments can be produced with reduced costs for state, regional and local municipalities.

*"An investment in our children's education is more than an investment in our economic future. It is also an investment in the lifeblood of our local community. Why shouldn't today's schools be part of a neighborhood's civic life, bringing together education, recreation and community service?"*

GEORGE MINTER
Director of Public Affairs,
Southern California
Gas Company

# 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to provide new schools that can build better neighborhoods and more livable communities, some changes in planning, policies and practices will be needed. These changes must address the planning of schools and communities as integrated systems rather than independent parts. They must provide for more collaborative and participatory planning and implementation strategies, where the ideas and opinions of parents, students, educators and community representatives are more integral to the planning process.

With respect to the immediate issues of education and rapid growth facing the state over the next twenty years, changes in policies, planning and practices will be needed to:

❦ *Support more participatory and community-based planning.*

Community-based planning must become one of the standard practices of administrative and review agencies responsible for school planning, design and construction. Authorizing legislation needed to mandate and support these efforts will also be needed.

❦ *Support innovative educational facilities that promote the concept of learning communities and schools as centers of community.*

More integrative planning strategies must be developed by all agencies and institutions responsible for urban and regional planning. These planning strategies should incorporate methods for identifying and systematically integrating all community needs and assets.

❦ *Support the joint use of all public facilities.*

Institutional and regulatory barriers, such as legislation involving administrative authority or public safety (such as the Field Act) should be evaluated and modified to provide a wider range of opportunities for the use of all community facilities for educational and other purposes.

*"Improving schools in older and poorer neighborhoods is a pivotal strategy for smart growth. Families will live where there are excellent schools for their children."*

SUNNE WRIGHT MCPEAK
President and CEO
Bay Area Council

❦ *Support the planning of urban and suburban projects based on the principles of smart growth.*

Provide authorizing legislation to support the land use, housing and transportation principles of smart growth and additional authorizing legislation to promote the planning, design and execution of schools as centers of community.

❦ *Support the assessment of all public expenditures based on the concept of Integrated Resource Development.*

Develop policies and practices to support more integrated program development and budgeting with assessment tools that encourage and reward a more productive and efficient use of all community resources.

❦ *Support the development of an ongoing vehicle for communications and decision-making between all agencies, institutions and organizations involved in education reform and smart growth issues.*

Identify or develop a central coordinating institution to manage communications and advocate for more integrated planning and design of all state, regional and local community resources. A first step could be convening a statewide summit to bring together education reform and smart growth leaders to craft a common agenda and an implementation strategy.

California has an unprecedented opportunity to consolidate and integrate the design and maintenance of community infrastructure to maximize the use of all community resources. The development of an institutional framework that can support more systemic and ecological goals is the challenge for planners and visionary leaders. But, at best, planners can only hope to facilitate and guide the process. A community wide inter-dependent living and learning environment that is developed and sustained by its constituents is at the core of an ongoing evolution of the American democratic vision.

*"All levels of government should work together to build the best schools in the best locations that we can–coordinating our efforts and leveraging our resources to make our school sites not only centers for education, but for reading and research as libraries, for health care as clinics, and as epicenters of civic life in their communities."*

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
L.A. County Board of Supervisors

# 9 A Call to Convergence

California, get smart!

Every year educational facilities are built all across the state. Too many of these facilities are dinosaurs the day they open. At the same time, a wide range of libraries, parks, and other state, regional and local facilities are being planned and constructed to duplicate many of the same functions and services. Meanwhile, a demand for 250,000 new homes every year is consuming thousands of acres of farmland in suburban sprawl, exacerbating critical problems with transportation and pollution. A crisis already exists. The rapid escalation of this crisis is producing irreversible consequences for the quality of life of Californians now and in the future.

There is an urgent need to create appropriate mechanisms for planning, policies and practice to guide California's near-term and long-term growth. Knowing that the amount of time needed for creating these tools will itself be time consuming, the urgency is even more acute to take immediate action on the crucial first steps.

The resources needed to meet the challenge are already available. Powerful movements aimed at education reform and smart growth already offer promising concepts, coalitions, policy recommendations and communications vehicles to intensify the evolution of creative solutions. With a convergence of these two movements, Californians might actually achieve the inter-dependent goals of New Schools, Better Neighborhoods, More Livable Communities.

California, just imagine what if...

*"The taxpayers of California make a significant investment in public schools every year, and they have a right to want these facilities used to the max. The school as a community center not only improves the utilization of school buildings, it also helps reconnect an aging population to the educational process and the wonderful potential of California kids of every kind and color."*

Carol Whiteside
President
Great Valley Center
Modesto, California

### What If

New Schools•Better Neighborhoods •More Livable Communities is a commissioned report of the Metropolitan Forum Project, and was underwritten by The James Irvine Foundation's Sustainable Communities Program, administered by Nick Bollman, Senior Program Director. [nbollman@Irvine.org]

### About the Author

Steven Bingler is the report's author. [sbingler@concordia.com] He is an architect and planner with considerable national and California experience facilitating inclusive community participation in the planning and designing of schools as centers of learning and community. His call for a convergence of the Smart Growth and Educational Reform movements is buttressed by both his research and his extensive experience as a consultant to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and school districts throughout the country. Mr. Bingler most recently has been a principal consultant to the Metropolitan Forum Project's New Schools• Better Neighborhoods collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District. The latter's goal is the building of one hundred new schools that are not only 21st Century learning centers, but centers of revitalized communities within metropolitan Los Angeles.

Steven Bingler is the President of Concordia Inc., a planning firm based in New Orleans, Louisiana. [www.concordia.com]

Concordia's planning research focuses on the integration of educational facilities with all the resources of the total community.

### Getty Symposium

The New Schools•Better Neighborhoods Symposium at the Getty Center in May of 1999 was the catalyst for this report's publication. A committed cadre of neighborhood, regional and state leaders emerged from that two-day event with a common vision: the intelligent investment of voter-approved school, park, library, health and other public funds to build not only public facilities that keep the rain out, but more livable urban communities in California.

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